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WILL BRADLEY • THE ECHO OF A DREAM.



OWN the road they came, the first on the right, the second on the left, and the third a little in the rear ; and the first was robed in scarlet, the second in black, and the third in white. On the breasts of their tunics were crests ; on the first a peacock, on the second a coiled serpent, and on the third a lily.

On they came ; the first with a haughty smile of triumph, the second with a scowl, and the third with eyes that saw only the flowers that he held.

And now they reached the cross-roads. That to the right led to the city, where could be seen in the dim distance beautiful buildings, towering spires, and waving banners of many colors. Soft strains of music came to them over the intervening hills, and there was an echo of laughter and joyous voices.

The road to the left was dark and dismal ; and over it came the sound of many voices, and there were cries of pain, and the voices rang with sadness and not with joy.

The other road led to the hills, many of them steep and rough ; and the road seemed but little used. Strewn across it were fallen and decaying trees ; there were spots that were dry and sterile, and places where the rocks were rough and travel seemed impossible ; but here and there along the road were pools of the clearest, brightest water, and beside the pools there grew the loveliest of flowers ; and here and there a bird fluttered among the branches, and its song was sweet to the ear.

The sun had sunk behind the hills ; the quiet stream by the roadside caught the reflection of the trees and mirrored it black against the dull yellow of the heavens.

And the first, he who was robed in scarlet and whose crest was a peacock, hesitated at the cross-roads. He looked out upon the hills. In the distance they were carpeted with soft green ; but they were steep, and the road was rough, and there came from the city strains of beautiful music, the echo of laughter, and shouts of joy ; and he turned his face toward that road ; and as he turned the sun sank from his sight, and the green hills, touched for a moment by its departing glory, were tinged with gold, and from the road, so rough and difficult to travel, came the sweet song of a bird, and the fragrance of flowers, and the sound of rippling water ; but the city was now illumined with many-colored lights, and still there came the echo of laughter, the shout of joy, and the sound of music ; and he who was robed in scarlet and whose crest was a peacock, turned to that road, and the scarlet of his robe blended with the colored lights of



"Down the road they came."

the city ; and there came the echo of laughter, and he caught the echo ; and there came the shout of joy, and he caught its thrill ; and the echo was his laughter and the shout his joy.

And the second one, he whose robe was black and whose crest was a coiled serpent, also halted at the cross-roads ; and the green hills in the distance were tinged with gold, and his face brightened and his eyes were filled with longing ; but the gold faded from the hills, and the road was rough and strewn with rocks, and his countenance darkened ; and there came from the other road a cry of pain, and it was dark, and there were shouts and groans, the sickening crash of steel, the sound of blows, and the dull clink of gold ; and he turned, and as he turned there came the sweet song of a bird, the fragrance of flowers, and the sound of rippling waters ; but the road was rough and long, the gold had faded from the hills, and in the distance there was still the cry of pain, and it was dark. There came the clink of gold, and he felt lovingly of his purse and fingered the hilt of the steel beneath his cloak ; and in the distance it was dark and dismal, and the blackness of his robe blended with the blackness of the night ; and there came the echo of a cry, and he caught the echo ; and there came the clash of steel, and he caught its thrill ; and the cry was his cry and the steel his steel.

And the third, he who was robed in white and whose crest was a liiy, came to the cross-roads ; and from the city there came the sound of music, the laughter of many voices, and the shout of joy ; and from the other road came groans and the cry of pain. In the distance the hills were dark ; their golden crown had faded into the night. The city was lit with many-colored lights, and there came the sound of music, the laughter of many voices, and the shout of joy ; and from the other road came the cry of pain and the sound of strife.

He went on ; and as he went there came the sweet song of a bird ; the road was rough, but there came the fragrance of flowers, and their fragrance mingled with that of the flowers in his hand and they became more beautiful ; and the clear water sparkled in the pools by the wayside, and the road was long.

The whiteness of his robe caught the sparkle of the water and was illumined, and made bright the way ; and there came the sound of music, the laughter of many voices, and the shout of joy, and they were faint and lost in the sweet song of the bird ; and there came the cry of pain and the clash of steel, and they were faint ; and the sweet song of the bird filled the air, and the laughter and the cry of pain became lost in the night, and the song of the bird filled the heavens.

The lights of the city grew dim, and the light from the water filled the night with splendor. He of the white robe was far away in the hills, and the hills were green ; they

reflected the brightness of his robes and were tinged with gold ; and the water sparkled and the glory of it all shone in the valley. The road became less rough ; and in the distance there was no city, and from out the night there came no cry—only the song of the bird, the fragrance of the flowers, and the sparkle of the water.

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Returning again to the cross-roads, he who was first came last, and the last first. The scarlet robe was torn and dim ; the peacock was covered with dust and spotted with mire ; the haughty smile had given way to care, and the brow was furrowed deeply.

And he of the black robe came, and on the robe were spots of red, and his crest was red ; his face was black, as dark as his robe ; and from his purse came the clink of gold, and the gold was stained with red.

And he who was last came ; and his robe was white and his crest had blossomed and was sweet ; and there was a bird, and the bird sang and its song was sweet ; in his girdle were flowers, and the flowers had caught the light from the water and were more beautiful than the day ; and the song of the bird, and the fragrance of the flowers, and the sparkle of the robe were unto all men a light and a guide.

He of the red robe and he of the black robe held up the white robe, that even the hem of it should not touch the dust.

And it was evening ; the sun was sinking behind the hills ; the quiet stream by the roadside caught the reflection of the trees and mirrored it back against the dull yellow of the heavens.

And he of the scarlet robe, whose crest was a peacock, was called Folly.

And he of the black robe, whose crest was a coiled serpent, was called Crime.

And he of the white robe, whose crest was a lily, was called Truth.

And they were three brothers, and their name was Ambition.

TREND.

The Right Way, though narrow and steep at the start,
Grows easier as we ascend,
But the Wrong Way, begun with the soothingest art,
Is bitter and rough in the end.